

**Flynn, Eileen**

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**From:** Andrea Koolis <JKoolis@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2015 6:09 PM  
**To:** HSTestimony  
**Subject:** Raised Bill 6941

Andrea Koolis  
154 Lexington Road  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

March 16, 2015

RE: Raised Bill 6941 (an act concerning state agency interpreter services)

To members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Andrea Koolis and I have worked as a certified sign language interpreter for 15 years. I currently work as a per diem interpreter for LifeBridge Community Services, a private nonprofit organization.

I am writing to state my opposition to the Raised Bill 6941.

I have read and reviewed this proposed bill and its effect, if implemented. I believe there are far more problems than advantages and would like to bring them to your attention.

First, it is my understanding that a statute similar to this was a law in the State of Connecticut and then was removed because it was problematic at best. One of the key reasons this statute was removed was to allow a bigger base of people to provide services, which has been done. With the number of requests for sign language interpreters, it is impossible for one organization to fill them all.

Second, it is important to understand that very often requests for our services come in only a day or so prior to the event requiring our services. I have received many interpreting assignments with a 24 -48 window due to consumers not being able to access interpreters from other agencies. LifeBridge does try to meet the needs as best we can, but with last minute requests, we cannot always be successful and the consumer goes without interpreting services.

Third, consumer choice has been and continues to be very important and this bill eliminates that option. In fairness to all State agencies, they should be given the option to contact more than one entity in order for them to ensure the communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing are met.

With consumers having equal access to both the Department of Rehabilitation Services and LifeBridge Community Services, we will be better able to meet the needs of our consumers. And as both agencies maintain solid quality control and oversight, our consumers are guaranteed qualified and experienced interpreters.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrea Koolis